



Regarding *the report of the Secretary-General on the safety of journalists & the issue of impunity*

Answers to the questionnaire from Bahrain Center for Human Rights

Completed on 23-03-2017

1. Please identify the gender-specific obstacles and human rights violations, or risks thereof, faced by women journalists working in your country or abroad. Please elaborate on how these obstacles and violations manifest themselves in practice and how they differ from the obstacles and human rights violations faced by their male counterparts.

Both female and male journalists are unable to carry out their work properly, in Bahrain. The country does not have a free press, and journalists are unable to express themselves freely. The situation for male and female journalists in Bahrain differs as female journalists are unable to stay as long as their male counterparts when covering protests that inevitably involve clashes and unrest between protesters and police, as individuals involved ask female journalists to leave, to prevent injury.

2. Please indicate whether you monitor and collect information and disaggregated data (e.g. by sex, gender identity, ethnicity, age, online/offline, focus areas of work) specifically on the gender-specific obstacles and human rights violations, or risks thereof, faced by women journalists.

Both male and female journalists face equal difficulties when collecting information in Bahrain, and as such we do not monitor or collect information and disaggregated data specifically on gender specific obstacles and human rights violations. BCHR has reported on incidents where male and female journalists have been targeted by the authorities, interrogated, and subjected to the same and/or similar human rights violations.



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3. What programmes and initiatives have your organisation adopted to address the issue of the safety of women journalists, including the underlying causes of the obstacles and human rights violations, and harmful gender stereotypes, experienced by women journalists? How do these measures differ from those adopted to address the issue of safety of journalists more generally, or the safety of male journalists? Please elaborate on the impact of any measures adopted.

BCHR has not adopted any programmes to address the issue of the safety of women journalists, but has been following and reporting on reprisals against prominent female journalists, such as Nazeeha Saeed.

4. Are the measures – if any - referred to in response to Question 3 above part of a “gender-sensitive approach” (see General Assembly resolution 70/162, page 3)? If so, what does this approach consist of?

No specifically adopted programmes or initiatives.

5. In the country/countries in which your organisation works, are there any specific laws and/or policies or initiatives (e.g. training, awareness-raising) to address harmful gender stereotypes, intersecting forms of discrimination and other human rights violations experienced by women journalists in the course of carrying out their work (e.g. in the workplace, in the field, online)? What is the impact of these laws, policies or initiatives?

BCHR is not aware of existing laws and/or policies or initiatives to address harmful gender stereotypes.

6. In the country/countries in which your organisation works, are there any specific laws and/or policies or initiatives (e.g. training, awareness-raising) to address violations of international humanitarian law committed against women journalists?

Bahrain has in recent years developed a number of initiatives and policies that aim to address the violations of international humanitarian law committed against women, however they have yet to specifically address the issue of women journalists. In general the country has been extremely slow to implement and enforce programs that aim to raise awareness about the rights of women.



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7. What mechanisms and/or networks do you have in place to share information and increase the protection of women journalists, particularly in situations of conflict or political instability?

BCHR staff in Bahrain is making use of all communication tools available (emails, phone calls, messages and also social media) to share information about female journalists. As an organisation we frequently write statements on journalists that have been targeted by the authorities, and in doing so highlight the crackdown on freedom of expression, and the human rights violations journalists are subjected to whilst carrying out their work. We have previously reported on cases where women journalists have interrogated, tortured, had their journalistic licenses revoked, and placed under travel bans for their work. We will continue to report and share information with other organisations in order to highlight abuses that take place with the aim of increasing protection for female journalists.

8. What gender-specific barriers have women journalists who are victims of human rights violations faced in obtaining an effective remedy?

In general, women in Bahraini society are less likely to report harassment and human rights violations, due to social conventions surrounding the notions of honour and morality, there are also very few services that offer support to women who have been subjected to human rights violations. Bahrain also fails to directly legislate on violence against women, and provide gender specific protections for women.

9. Please indicate if your organisation has developed specific initiatives for the safety of women journalists in light of the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goal 5 and Goal 16.

BCHR has not developed any specific initiatives in this area.